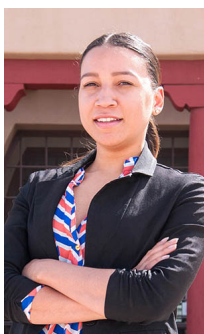


## Political newcomer poised to face incumbent Sen. George Munoz

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 04 March 2016 05:08

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### Filing date for state offices is March 8

The 2016 race for District 4 of the New Mexico Senate will feature one familiar face and a new one. Felicia Adams of Iyanbito, NM said March 1 that she plans on filing the proper paperwork in Santa Fe March 8 to run against incumbent Sen. George Munoz.

Adams announcement follows an initial announcement to run that was made two months ago at the Iyanbito Chapter House. But she doesn't mention anything that Munoz has done, or their philosophical differences that may have prompted her to run against him. Only what she brings to the table.

"There is a saying that if you want something done then do it yourself," Adams said. "I want to ensure a healthy future for us all. Considering the date and patterns that occur in this area I believe I can benefit more people within this position through my natural leadership as well as my passion to promote self-empowerment and community relations through my nonprofit mission."

Adams, 29, is the granddaughter of former New Mexico House of Representative member Albert Shirley – also of Iyanbito. However, she does not possess political experience at any level. Shirley, still active in the area political scene, served the state House of Representatives during the 1980s.

Adams, who is a business and economic development student at Dine College, said she doesn't plan to be a clone of Shirley as far as policy and approach go, downplaying a political relationship between the two. She said she has clear and specific reasons as to why she wants to run right now.

"The better we can do for our community the better the community can do for itself," Adams explained. "In looking at me running from a business perspective, the priorities are investing and protecting our assets. People, land and resources are our greatest assets. I feel that it is important that we invest in our people through cultivating better educational statistics as well as protecting our people by improving conditions in public health, public safety and living conditions."

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Adams, who owns and operates an area business, continued, "Technology allows for roads to be built, which can position us to benefit from our land resources. I believe I can create a better work environment for the various local organizations that currently have a hand in these programs."

Adams was raised in Iyanbito and San Diego, Calif., the latter of which she graduated from high school. Adams is a former winner of a Native American music award while living in San Diego.

"I am a natural entrepreneur who has a diverse business management firm (I Am the Biz, Inc.) and a nonprofit organization (Balance-N-Options) that is dedicated to educating individuals in to improving their lifestyles," she said.

New Mexico's senate District 4 territory includes McKinley, Cibola and San Juan counties. A state primary is set for June 8 and the general election is Nov. 8. All 42 state Senate seats are up for grabs this year.

Interestingly, this isn't the first time that Munoz has been challenged in a statewide race. Current McKinley County Board of Commissioner Genevieve Jackson put forth an unsuccessful District 4 bid four years ago. New Mexico legislators earn a per diem salary that amounts to about \$164.

### MUNOZ'S track record

A Gallup native and long-time local business owner, Munoz, D-Gallup, is the son of former Gallup mayor Ed Munoz. He was first elected to the state Senate in 2009.

He noted the March 1 signing by Gov. Susana Martinez of 2016 state legislation that cracks down on repeat DWI offenders and DWI offenders that kill.

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The legislation, sponsored by Munoz, increases penalties for drunk drivers who kill people on the road and makes it a second degree felony to be convicted of eight or more DWIs, increasing mandatory sentencing from two to 10 years, with a maximum sentence of 12 years.

“Anybody can run for state office,” Munoz said of past and present challengers. “Obviously, you work for the taxpayers. That is important.”

Munoz serves on the Legislative Finance Committee, the Indian Affairs Committee, the Revenue Stabilization and Tax Policy Committee, among others.

But his career is not without its blemishes. Munoz got in to hot water about a year ago when he reportedly sent text messages to a university of New Mexico Board of Regents appointee that he’d vote for his confirmation if the appointee would fire the school’s president and vice president of finance. The appointee was Rob Doughty.

***By Bernie Dotson***  
***Sun Correspondent***